

March 21, 2011

Mr. James Holmes
[REDACTED]
San Diego, CA 92129

Dear Mr. Holmes:

I am very pleased to inform you that you have been accepted as a graduate student into the Neuroscience Program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Those who met you at during your interview visit felt that your personal and professional qualities are truly outstanding and that you will be an excellent match for our program. We are very excited about having you in our program, and we hope you will accept our offer. Please let us know as soon as possible, but no later than April 15, once you have come to a decision about accepting our offer of admission.

The Neuroscience Program has historically provided support for all graduate students who remain in good academic standing. Support will be provided through a combination of fellowship, NIH traineeship, teaching assistantship, and research assistantship. The starting stipend is currently \$22,660 per year plus waiver of tuition and most fees.

I encourage you to speak further with members of our faculty in whose research you are interested, and who might serve as your research advisor. In particular, Drs. Roberto Galvez and Lee Beverly have expressed interest in having you join their laboratories.

We hope we will see you here in the fall! If you have any further questions about the program, please feel free to contact our Director, Gene Robinson, our Coordinator, Sam Beshers, or myself.

Sincerely,



J. Lee Beverly, Professor
Chair, Neuroscience Admissions Committee

James Holmes

Aspiring Scientist

Home [REDACTED]

Home Address

James Holmes

[REDACTED]
San Diego, CA 92129

OBJECTIVE

To obtain a position as a neuroscience graduate student

EDUCATION

- 2006 - 2010, University of California, Riverside
- Graduated with B.S. in Neuroscience
- Dean's Fellow
- Regent's Scholar
- Phi Beta Kappa Society

SKILLS

- Dissection, buffer preparation and staining
- Fluorescence microscopy, dissection microscopy, cell counts
- Proficient using computer software including Microsoft Office
- Adaptable to work environment; problem solver

RELATED EXPERIENCE

UCR, Department of Cellular Biology & Neuroscience Riverside, CA 92521 December 2007 - September 2009
Laboratory Assistant

- Digitization of mice with mitochondrial rich muscle
- Fluorescence microscopy of neuronal mapping of the Zebra Finch
- Dissection, staining and photography of hummingbird and Passeriforme flight muscles
- Comparison of motor end plate stains of flight muscles

Camp Max Straus 6505 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 600 June 2008 - August 2008
Camp Counselor

- Provided leadership and guidance to underprivileged children.
- Took an active stance as a positive role model.
- Assisted children in achieving their potential.
- Facilitated excellence in mentoring.

UCR, Department of Chemistry Riverside, CA 92521 December 2006 - June 2007
Laboratory Assistant

- Analyzed mass spectrometry and HPLC data, graphs and principles
- Performed redox titrations, chromatography, ultra violet spectroscopy, etc.

Salk Institute for Biological Studies La Jolla, CA 92037 June 2006 - August 2006
Student Intern

- Designed a computer program to illustrate temporal perceptions of causality
- Executed procedures (pipeting, gel electrophoresis, conceptual modeling, etc.)
- Programmed a flicker fusion utility, which notes differences in contrast between monitors.

Rational people act based on incentives for self-fulfillment, including fulfilling needs of self-development and needs of feeling useful and helpful to others. I look forward to fulfilling my quest to advance my knowledge and I plan to use my critical thinking skills by studying the subject I am passionate about, neuroscience.

I desire to attend graduate study at the University of Illinois, a leader and innovator in scientific research, because the university will provide opportunities to pursue my foremost passions, the science of learning, cognition and memory. I have always been fascinated by the complexities of a long lost thought seemingly arising out of nowhere into a stream of awareness. These fascinations likely stemmed from my interest in puzzles and paradoxes as an adolescent and continued through my curiosity in academic research.

Making new discoveries in neuroscience is intrinsically rewarding in its own right. I have an unquenchable curiosity, a strong desire to know and explore the unknown, and a need to persist against the odds. Graduate study at the University of Illinois will provide a focus for me to perform and achieve through neuroscience research.

To prepare myself for graduate study at the University of Illinois, I sought involvement in a general array of academic research. My first summer internship, at the Salk Institute of Biological Studies, was done while I was still in high school. Working in Terrence Sejnowsky's computational neurobiology lab, I had little experience in computer programming and the work was challenging to say the least. Nonetheless, I taught myself how to program in Flash and then constructed a cross-temporal calibration model. The purpose of this model was to show an illusion between cause and effect relationships. In this illusion, the mind is actually tricked into believing an action precedes the event that caused it. Completing the project and presenting my model at the end of the internship was exhilarating and I believe graduate study at the University of Illinois will provide commensurate opportunities for a satisfying neuroscience research experience.

Another laboratory I worked in was within the department of chemistry at the University of California, Riverside. Having previously been exposed to a computational approach, I wanted to explore the facets of chemical analysis. Beginning by making buffer solutions, I soon advanced into more complicated techniques. These included performing high performance liquid chromatography, mass spectrometry and ultra violet spectroscopy on a modified twelve mer dna sequence. With the end product we bombarded the dna with ultra violet rays to observe cancerous effects. Although I don't plan on curing cancer in graduate school I believe this research experience is worthwhile and relevant to my goals of contributing to neuroscience. Only with a multidisciplinary perspective to the specialized field of neuroscience can we hope to fully understand the brain.

The most recent laboratory I worked in was the Flight Lab in the department of cellular biology and neuroscience. Working in this lab enabled me to distinguish structural and quantitative differences in neural systems at a lower level of functional analysis. I dissected various flight muscles of Passeriformes and then stained their motor end plates. With these stained muscles, I compared their arrangements to the stained muscles of hummingbirds, which have a unique motor end plate pattern. In the future my

goal is to analyze and study higher neural functional levels of analysis such as learning and memory.

Researching learning and memory interests me because these are the very cognitive processes which enable us to acquire information and retain it. They are at the core of what distinguishes us as people. Due to the seemingly infinite vastness of indefinite knowledge we must be selective in our pursuits of knowledge. This is why I have chosen to study the primary source of all things, our own minds.

Ultimately, I aspire to become a cognitive neuroscientist. I intend to continue performing research after graduate school in either academic or public sectors. My life-long goal is to increase the efficiency of how human beings learn and remember.



Letter of Reference

Submitted Date: 10/26/2010 4:30:00 PM

Applicant Information

First Name: James

Last Name: Holmes

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

Proposed Program of Study: Neuroscience

Degree: Neuroscience--PHD

Term of Application:

Recommender Information

First Name: [REDACTED]

Last Name: [REDACTED]

Institution / Organization: [REDACTED]

Position / Title: [REDACTED]

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

To what extent do you recommend this applicant for admission as a graduate student in their proposed field of study?

I strongly recommend this applicant

Please describe how long you have known the applicant and under what circumstances you have known the applicant:

I have known James for four years through his participation in [REDACTED].

Please evaluate the applicant in comparison with others you have known during your professional career. Describe the comparison group you are using:

I am comparing James to other senior undergraduates in his major.

Please submit a statement of recommendation addressing the applicant's abilities to pursue graduate studies and research. Please address the following as applicable: the applicant's ability to work with peers, supervisors and subordinates; teaching potential; any outstanding abilities, talents, liabilities and weaknesses; and oral and written communication skills.

Thank you for your thoughtful assessment of this applicant. Your responses will provide the Admissions Committee with information needed to make a thorough evaluation of the applicant. Please send comments or concerns to Illinois Graduate and Professional Admissions at gradadmissions@illinois.edu.

October 15, 2010

Dear Graduate School Selection Committee:

I am writing this letter in support of the graduate school application of Mr. James Holmes. I have known James for the past [REDACTED] years through [REDACTED]. The [REDACTED] Program consists of accelerated courses and the completion of quarterly required learning contracts. Students must successfully complete a learning contract that includes a core set of Honors courses, maintaining a minimum grade point average, attending academic workshops, and completing at least 10 hours of community service and 10 hours of personal growth. The [REDACTED] Program is rigorous and rewarding for students.

James is among the top 1% of Honors students and is self-motivated, intelligent, and driven. As a neuroscience major in the Honors Program, James maintains a 3.949 cumulative grade point average and has been named to the Dean's Honors and Chancellor's Honors Lists for his academic excellence. He has also received recognition at the annual Honors Convocation for his scholarly endeavors. This past June, James graduated from the University with highest honors, Summa Cum Laude. James is an extraordinarily gifted student who is very dedicated to his academic pursuits. He takes an active role in his education, and brings a great amount of intellectual and emotional maturity into the classroom. He is passionate about a career in science and seeks out opportunities to learn as much as possible about his chosen field of interest, and how he can positively contribute to the world.

James worked for two years as a laboratory assistant in the Department of Cell Biology and Neuroscience. He engaged in biotechnology research, and he approached his research responsibilities with the same level of maturity, intellectual curiosity, and critical thinking as he has his other academic pursuits. James has a desire to contribute to the body of knowledge and understanding of neurobiology including how learning and memory function. He is eager to continue to expand his knowledge and experience in the field. James received excellent evaluations from the professor's and graduate students with whom he worked and was mentored. He has received excellent training for the rigor of graduate school, and I strongly recommend him for admission.

I encourage you to consider Mr. James Holmes among your top candidates and thank you for your consideration of him. If you would like more information, please contact me at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

Sincerely,



Letter of Reference

Submitted Date: 11/11/2010 2:09:00 PM

Applicant Information

First Name: James

Last Name: Holmes

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

Proposed Program of Study: Neuroscience

Degree: Neuroscience--PHD

Term of Application:

Recommender Information

First Name: [REDACTED]

Last Name: [REDACTED]

Institution / Organization: [REDACTED]

Position / Title: [REDACTED]r

E-Mail: e [REDACTED]

To what extent do you recommend this applicant for admission as a graduate student in their proposed field of study?

Please describe how long you have known the applicant and under what circumstances you have known the applicant:

Please evaluate the applicant in comparison with others you have known during your professional career. Describe the comparison group you are using:

Please submit a statement of recommendation addressing the applicant's abilities to pursue graduate studies and research. Please address the following as applicable: the applicant's ability to work with peers, supervisors and subordinates; teaching potential; any outstanding abilities, talents, liabilities and weaknesses; and oral and written communication skills.

Thank you for your thoughtful assessment of this applicant. Your responses will provide the Admissions Committee with information needed to make a thorough evaluation of the applicant. Please send comments or concerns to Illinois Graduate and Professional Admissions at gradadmissions@illinois.edu.

October 16, 2010

Re: James Holmes's application to Program

Dear Selection Committee:

I am writing this letter in support of James Holmes's application to your Graduate Program. I have discussed with James his future professional goals on several occasions and I am impressed about his determination to develop his professional career in the field of neuroscience.

I got to know James [REDACTED]. This class [REDACTED]. Besides formal lectures students are required to prepare Power Point presentation of original peer-reviewed paper and participate in debates on specific topics. James did very well earning A. James is also a student in [REDACTED]. This class [REDACTED]. It requires active participation and James excel at this. Besides his excellent performance on all exams he prepared very well designed PowerPoint presentation discussing one of the current topics in neuroscience, which required reading original scientific papers, and gave very good presentation. He also has proved to be very effective group leader working on the group project assignment. Again, he did excellent earning A. James demonstrated in both classes that he is the top student and that he has a strong drive towards neuroscience. This performance in both classes speaks to his intellectual capability and to his motivation.



James will do well in his future professional training because of his intelligence, motivation and passion towards science. Thus, I am pleased to recommend him to you.

Sincerely,





Letter of Reference

Submitted Date: 12/9/2010 4:17:00 PM

Applicant Information

First Name: James

Last Name: Holmes

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

Proposed Program of Study: Neuroscience

Degree: Neuroscience--PHD

Term of Application:

Recommender Information

First Name: [REDACTED]

Last Name: [REDACTED]

Institution / Organization:

Position / Title:

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

To what extent do you recommend this applicant for admission as a graduate student in their proposed field of study?

Please describe how long you have known the applicant and under what circumstances you have known the applicant:

Please evaluate the applicant in comparison with others you have known during your professional career. Describe the comparison group you are using:

Please submit a statement of recommendation addressing the applicant's abilities to pursue graduate studies and research. Please address the following as applicable: the applicant's ability to work with peers, supervisors and subordinates; teaching potential; any outstanding abilities, talents, liabilities and weaknesses; and oral and written communication skills.

Thank you for your thoughtful assessment of this applicant. Your responses will provide the Admissions Committee with information needed to make a thorough evaluation of the applicant. Please send comments or concerns to Illinois Graduate and Professional Admissions at gradadmissions@illinois.edu.

December 7, 2010

Dear Member of the Admissions Committee:

I am pleased to recommend James Holmes for admission to your graduate program. James was a student in my [REDACTED] at the University of California, Riverside. I rate James as an excellent student based on his performance in my course. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] is [REDACTED]. The course involves [REDACTED]. The students have to [REDACTED]. In many ways, this course is [REDACTED]. James' good performance in this course therefore indicates a motivated student with a logical thought process and the ability to integrate knowledge with advanced concepts and techniques.

My communication with James indicates a quiet, hard-working and professional individual. I evaluate his writing skills as excellent based on the papers submitted to fulfill requirements for my course. Please contact me if you have any questions regarding my recommendation of James Holmes

Thank you,
Sincerely,